BOATS

Sakayan is the general term for all types of dug-out boats; there are two main classes. The banca (normally the bokaran and panahiran) is the larger group of boats, whereas the baroto, a smaller group, includes the begiw, tango, kayagkagan, and solongan. The sailing boat, usually much larger than the banca, is called parkahan or pareo. There were no pareos in Siaton although I saw some in Tolong poblacion. None of the boats in Siaton had inboard or outboard motors. 501

Many boats are made in Barrio Mangoto, Pamplona municipality; fishermen in Siaton rarely make their own boats because of lack of suitable timber in the vicinity. Sketches were made of the most frequently seen boats in Siaton; the panahiran, bokaran and begiw are the most numerous.[71] (See Plate LVII.)[1] 396 438 501

Barrio Mangoto is an hour's walk west of Pamplona coconut plantation, in Pamplona municipality. The community is situated in the hilly piedmont region of the Central Mountain range at the edge of a forest beset by caingins, 101

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[71] I am grateful to Pedro Solde, a prominent fisherman of Siaton poblacion, for his assistance in introductions to his friends in Tanjay. Acknowledgement is also made to Antonio Torres, a Tanjay boat contractor of several decades, who made a special trip to Mangoto with me and my assistant to introduce us to the people. Two days were spent in Mangoto gathering most of the information presented in this section on boat construction. The data were augmented by Siaton informants who had purchased boats in Mangoto.

1 [See p. 623, cat. 501 or 116 -- Analyst]

boat-builders and a nearby sawmill. Large areas, *cain-gins* of the past, are covered with cogon grass; corn is the principal crop. The region is full of stumps and charred or decaying tree trunks. Many house walls are made of bark peeled from trees in the nearby forest. Mangoto is a community of Christian farmers many of whom have specialized in boat construction. 101

Arranging for the Purchase of a Boat

It is customary for a Siaton fisherman who wishes to buy a boat to contact a Tanjay contractor. One boat contractor, who had been in the business for nearly 30 years, reported there were three "old-timers in Tanjay besides the newcomers." Usually the buyer tells the contractor the type of boat desired and what he will pay. The buyer depends on the contractor to see that the boat is properly built and delivered within the agreed period. 437 396 472 675

Some buyers, however, go to the *barrio* with the contractor to discuss the boat with the workers and even to select the tree. Often the buyer pays down one-half of the price; the remainder of the fee is paid upon delivery. However, one Siaton informant stated:

> This is not often done. Many workers cannot be trusted. This is why you need a contractor who will see that the work is done properly and the workers do not loaf.

When the contractor is paid one-half of the boat's full price he may share part of this money with his workers. Other buyers refuse to give either the contractor or the

workers an advance on an order. One Siaton fisherman paid some workers in this community one-half of the contracted price for a boat that never was delivered. 437 396 472 675

The contractor usually discusses the order with the workers he plans to employ. As one contractor said; "I talk with them to see if they feel the arrangements I made are reasonable." The contractor receives no fixed percentage for his middleman activities; "what he gets depends upon the generosity of the buyer and the workers." Actually the contractor's bargaining position is excellent; he can contract with another group to build the boat if he does not anticipate a fair share of the profit. The boat-makers in Mangoto are farmers who earn money by building boats during slack periods.

The contractor's percentage appears to vary from 10 to 20 per cent of the total contracted price of a baroto, and from 10 to 15 per cent for a banca. In 1950 one contractor arranged for the construction of more than twenty boats; he received from $1.75 to $2.50 on a baroto and from $10 to $20 on a banca. Boat prices vary with their size. Before the last war a baroto sold for as little as three dollars whereas a banca brought between $25 to $30. Today's prices are inflated. A baroto costs $10 to $15 and a banca $75 to $200.

Some good-sized boats are built in Mangoto; I saw a large parao being pulled to the Tanjay River. This parao had been built for a Cebu fisherman who stayed in the barrio during its construction. Thirty carabao were 396 501 483

tugging the boat up a steep hill. The boat measured 63 feet in length and the widest part of the hull exceeded 3 feet.[72] For three days the group had been struggling to get the parao to the river from their destination. Each man received one dollar a day for both their labor and carabao.

Boat Construction

When the contractor has made all necessary arrangements the workers select a tree for the boat's hull. Trees used most frequently to make boats in Mangoto are magsinolog (white lauan), balangobang and lanitga (both species of red lauan). These woods are preferred by boat-builders for their lightness and durability.[73] In the past bay-ang trees were cut but today so few exist that they are not used. In the "old days," according to Siaton informants, many lanitga trees grew near Barrio Cabangahan

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[72] The bottom of the boat was 10 inches thick; the solid stern, where the motor was to be mounted, was 6 feet long.

[73] Magsinolog is probably Shorea eximia (Miquel) Scheffer, that is widely distributed in the Philippines. Reyes, op. cit., pp. 313-5. Reyes states S. eximia is sold in the local market as white lauan or almon "...and is an excellent wood for boat planking..." Lanitga is possibly Toona calantas Merrill and Rolfe, Reyes, op. cit., pp. 183-184. T. calantas is commonly known as kalantas but is called lanipga in Samar, Leyte and Cebu and grows in Negros; Reyes reports T. calantas is used to make boats. Balangobang is not listed by Reyes but was said to be a species of red lauan by the forestry officials in Tanjay. White and red lauan, according to Tamesis and Aguilar, is widely used in the Philippines for barato construction. Tamesis and Aguilar, op. cit., p. 64.

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and boats were made from them. Now lanitga trees have almost disappeared. The only boat I saw under construction in Siaton was in Barrio Sumalaring; the hull was being carved from a kapok tree.

People who cut red lauan are required by law to pay a tax of sixty-five cents per cubic meter to the municipality and a twenty-five-cent reforestration fee; for white lauan the charges are thirty cents per cubic meter and a twenty-cent reforestration fee. Wide violation of these forestry regulations occur in Mangoto; as one boatmaker told me: "Well, the forest is wide. Some foresters do not refuse a bribe, maybe as much as five dollars. But we only give them the money if caught."[74]

A method called pandita ("to-know") is used by some boat-builders to determine a tree's soundness. Any kind of a vine is obtained, one end bitten off, and then wrapped around a tree. The vine is then taken from the trunk and wrapped around one's head. If the bitten end of the vine ends at one's mouth, ear, nose or eye the tree is rotten and should not be cut. (Possibly the point is that if the vine ends at any of the "holes" of the human head the tree will also have holes inside?) It is obvious, as the workers admitted, that the pandita did not always work. In the locality of Mangoto one sees a

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[74] I talked with two foresters I met in the forest above Mangoto who assured me few boats were being built in the area. When they left I was shown two boats under construction less than 100 yards from where I talked with the foresters.

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number of cut trees that are partially hollowed and then abandoned because the bole was discovered to be rotten.

Some believe it best to cut a tree for a boat when the moon is "a thin slice in the sky," for trees cut then resist attack by wood-borers; I was unable to find out why. Ceremonies prior to cutting a tree are more frequently held in isolated unsettled areas. Some Mangoto workers flatly denied that such ceremonies were practiced; others explained them to me.

Pandita also denotes one ceremony to placate spirits. If a desired tree is believed to harbor spirits, a piece of wood, about 12 feet long, is leaned against its trunk. The cutter invites any spirits who live in this tree to move the piece of wood. If the wood is not removed when the cutter returns the following day, the tree is felled. Often the cutters plead with the spirits: "Please excuse me for cutting this tree. It is not my fault. Mr. --- [the name of the contractor or buyer] wishes to have a boat made and I must eat. So do not blame me for cutting your tree." Such a speech may be made even if the pandita were favorable.

A Siaton buyer witnessed the panditas. They are so similar to the caingin ceremonies previously described, that it is unnecessary to describe them in detail. A food offering is placed on a table at the base of the tree and the spirits are invited to dine. The food is made in sevens and consists of the rice cakes, taka, etc. One informant reported that Don Antoy, the legendary spirit of Pangligiran hill in Siaton, is invited to attend Mangoto panditas.

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Once felled the tree's top is severed, a process called babha; the axe used is called palakol. If the tree has buttresses a platform is built above them in order to cut the trunk. The trunk is carefully inspected to see it is lying flat on the ground. Then the trunk's top is leveled and marks are made for the tamboko; these are braces made to strengthen the boat. To mark the braces' positions a string is stretched the length of the log. The center of the string is used to mark the place for one set of braces on each side of the hull. The center of the first two halves of the string is used to mark the next set of braces, etc., until all are marked. Then the trunk is hollowed; in the past the trunk was burned but not today "because it takes too long."

The trunk is hollowed with a sharp adze (wasay). For trimming the outer sides a longer handle is fitted to the same adze head; this latter implement is called bingkong. Wooden wedges (konia) and a wooden mallet (maso) are used to split small pieces of wood from the hull's exterior and interior. No women are permitted to come near the unfinished boats for "the wood might crack." If a worker becomes ill while making a boat, some people believe that his sickness is caused by angry spirits struck when the tree fell. Only after a food offering (dolotan) is made to the vengeful spirits will the person recover, for a "real doctor cannot help in this sickness."

When the hull's interior is finished the boat is tipped to one side then to the other, while the bottom is

trimmed. Sometimes the wood cracks. To fill cracks, the dried sap of the bolitik tree is pounded, winnowed until very fine, and then mixed with kerosene. When this mixture dries it is hard and waterproof. 396

Smaller barotos are carried by hand to the Tanjay River and paddled down to the poblacion. Large boats are pulled to the river by carabaos. Some individuals conduct another pandita when the boat is launched; they kill a pig and offer food to the spirits. They mark a charcoal cross on the boat's bottom "so it will be easier to pull to the river and will not be damaged." A buyer may come to Tanjay poblacion to receive his boat, or the boat may be taken to the purchaser; this depends on the original contract. Larger boats are finished in Tanjay, and the mast, strakes, and motor mountings are added. Boats are made in Mangoto for owners who live in Panay, Cebu and Siquijor. 438 483

Types of Boats in Siaton

Bancas may be classified into three groups according to their length: the small class averages from 18 to 30 feet; medium class, from 30 to 35 feet; and the large class 35 feet or more. Names, however, are usually given according to their use. The bokaran is used mainly to net fish inside the bonsod. Bokarans do not have the outrigger (kateg); this makes them easier to handle inside a fish corral. For the same reason bokarans are usually used to retrieve bobos although the panahiran also is so 501